

Nephew And what reason have you to be miserable? You're rich enough!

Scrooge There's no such thing as rich enough! Only poor enough! (*He rams the money box deep into the safe and slams and locks the door with much clanging of metal*)

Nephew Don't be so dismal, Uncle Ebenezer!

Scrooge What else can I be, when I live in a world of fools babbling "Merry Christmas" at one another? What's Christmas but a time for finding yourself a year older and not a day richer? (*He thrusts his face menacingly at his nephew*) If I could work my will, Nephew, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart!

Nephew God forbid, Uncle!

Scrooge You keep Christmas in your way, and let me keep it in mine!

Nephew But you don't keep it!

Scrooge Then let me alone! And be good enough not to bother me, sir, during business hours. And get off me ledger—you'll ruin me binding!

The Nephew gets up off the desk and looks at his fob watch. Scrooge picks up the heavy ledger, examines the binding for possible damage and, with a reproachful glare at his Nephew, carries it across to a dusty bookcase and locks it away with a key from his watch-chain

Nephew Seven o'clock on Christmas Eve? That's not business hours! That's drudgery for the sake of it, and an insult to all men of goodwill!

Bob Cratchit (*muttering under his breath*) Hear, hear!

Nephew Thank you, Bob Cratchit!

Scrooge Another word from you, Cratchit, and you'll celebrate Christmas among the great unemployed.

Bob Cratchit Yes, sir. I'm sorry, Mr Scrooge.

The Nephew pulls a crusty face at his uncle, converting it into an instant smile as Scrooge turns to him

Scrooge You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into politics—you're fool enough!

The Nephew roars with laughter. Scrooge returns to his work

Nephew Come now, don't be angry! Dine with my wife and me tomorrow!

Scrooge There's another thing! As though you hadn't got enough problems, you went and got married! Now why in God's name did you do that?

Nephew Because I fell in love with the lady.